



GLEN PROVIDENCE PARK - SITE PLAN

PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Survey Code: _____ Tax Parcel/Other No.: 35-00-00809-00; 26-00-01793-01

County: 1. Delaware 0 4 5 2. _____

Municipality: 1. Media Borough _____ 2. _____

Address: within the Borough of Media and the Township of Upper Providence

Historic Name: Glen Providence Park

Other Name: _____

Owner Name/Address: Delaware County

Owner Category: _____ Private Public-local _____ Public-state _____ Public-federal _____

Resource Category: _____ Building _____ District Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: 7

USGS Quad: 1. Media, PA _____ 2. _____

UTM A. zone 18 E: 0465568 N: 4418657 C. zone 18 E: 0465716 N: 4418484

References: B. zone 18 E: 0465866 N: 4418919 D. zone 18 E: 0466098 N: 4418895

HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category:	Subcategory:	Code:
A. <u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>	<u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>F</u>
B. <u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>	<u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>F</u>
C. <u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>	<u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>F</u>
D. <u>Landscape</u>	<u>Park</u>	<u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>B</u>

Particular Type: A. Park

B. Guardhouse

C. Amphitheater

D. Lake

Current Function Category:	Subcategory:	Code:
A. <u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>	<u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>F</u>
B. <u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>	<u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>F</u>
C. <u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>	<u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>F</u>
D. <u>Landscape</u>	<u>Park</u>	<u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>B</u>

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: A: NA

B. _____ C. _____

D. _____ Other: _____

Exterior Materials: Foundation NA Roof NA

Walls NA Walls _____

Other _____ Other _____

Structural System: 1. NA 2. _____

Width: NA Depth: NA Stories/Height: NA

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: x C. 1930 to C. Additions/Alterations Dates: X C. 1940 ; C.

Basis for Dating: X Documentary X Physical

Explain: Based on historic maps, historic aerial photographs, primary documents, secondary sources, and an examination of the resource.

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation: 1. N/A 2.

Associated Individuals: 1. N/A 2.

Associated Events: 1. N/A 2.

Architects/Engineers: 1. N/A 2.

Builders: 1. N/A 2.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see Continuation sheet

PREVIOUS SURVEY, DETERMINATIONS

None

EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual NR Potential: X Yes No Context(s):

Contributes to Potential District Yes X No District Name/Status:

Explain: Glen Providence Park appears to meet criteria for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for recreation. The park is a good example of a community park, as it retains its historic setting, layout, and structures. The general layout of the park remains consistent with the layout of the park since its inception in 1933. The structures created by the WPA (including the trails, guardhouse, man made lake, and bridges) remain extant and in good condition. The park is a good example of a community park, created from donated land, and then improved upon by the WPA. Glen Providence Park was also evaluated for its eligibility under Criterion C. Glen Providence Park embodies the characteristics of an early twentieth-century community park. Composed of land which was donated by local residents, the park remains unaltered since the 1930s. The physical elements of the park (the guardhouse, amphitheater, bridges, etc...) have not been significantly altered since the early twentieth century, when they were constructed by the WPA. All of these structures are good examples of the work that was done by the WPA during this time period. In addition to the cohesiveness of these structures, the man made lake and trails are also still extant and in good condition. The park has retained its integrity of design, and is recommended eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C.

THREATS

Threats: 2 1. None 2. Public Development 3. Private Development 4. Neglect 5. Other

Explain: This property may be affected by proposed road improvements as part of the Third Street Dam Project, Media, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Surveyor Name/Title: Mary S. Alfson/Project Manager Date: November 15, 2001

Project Name: Third Street Dam Project

Organization: Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc. Telephone: 215-699-8006

Street and No.: 403 E. Walnut St.

City State: North Wales, PA Zip Code: 19454

Additional Survey Documentation: Site plan, photographs and property location map appended.

Associated Survey Codes:

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM - NARRATIVE SHEET 89C
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation

Survey Code: _____	Tax Parcel/Other No.: 35-00-00809-00; 26-00-01793-01
County: Delaware	Municipality: Media Borough
Address: within the Borough of Media and the Township of Upper Providence	
Historic/Other Name: Glen Providence Park	Sheet 1 of 5

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

This resource is located within the Borough of Media and the Township of Upper Providence, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. This property occupies tax parcels 35-00-00809-00 and 26-00-01793-01. The property is owned by Delaware County. The property includes a historic park, a historic stone guardhouse, and a small historic amphitheater. A historic man made lake, numerous historic bridges and trails, and a modern picnic shelter are also located within the park.

Glen Providence Park is located partly in the Borough of Media (approximately 12.22 hectares [30.2 acres]) and partly in Upper Providence Township (approximately 2.5 hectares [6.17 acres]), Delaware County. The park's northern boundary is defined by West Third Street, and its northwestern border is defined by Kirk Lane. To the southwest, south, and southeast, the park is bounded by privately-owned properties fronting on North Ridley Creek Road, West Baltimore Avenue, and State Street. A finger of the park extends southeastward past privately-owned land to allow for access via State Street. An unnamed tributary of Ridley Creeks flows southwestward through the eastern and southern portions of the park, toward a confluence with Ridley Creek approximately 300 meters (984.2 feet) southwest of the park's southern boundary.

The main entrance to the park is located along State Street. The entrance to the park consists of a historic stone guardhouse, which was constructed in the 1930s. Stone walls extend from the guardhouse along the sidewalk on either side of the park. Stone columns are located at regular intervals along the wall, running the entire length of the park. The guardhouse is banked into the side of a hill, with the roof on the same level as the adjacent roadway. The roof, which has been paved, serves as a platform overlooking the park. A low stone wall runs along the length of the roof, matching the wall running along the length of the park. A plaque, commemorating the park, is located in the center of the stone wall. It reads:

GLEN PROVIDENCE PARK
1936
THIS LAND WAS LARGELY DONATED
TO THE COUNTY OF DELAWARE BY
MR. AND MRS. GEORGE T. BUTLER
ADDITIONAL AREAS BY
JAMES J. SKEELY AND
MEDIA SWIMMING AND ROWING CLUB.
IMPROVEMENTS WERE FINANCED BY
THE COUNTY AND FEDERAL W.P.A. AID.
DEVELOPED AS AN ARBORETUM AND
BIRD SANCTUARY BY
DELAWARE CO. PARK BOARD/
SAMUEL L. SMEDLY PRESIDENT
"A GIFT OF LAND IS A GIFT ETERNAL"

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION (CONT):

Stone stairs, leading down into the park, are located on either side of the building. The front façade of the guardhouse consists of four historic windows and two modern doors. The windows are twenty-five pane fixed historic windows, featuring stone keystone lintels. The doors are modern metal panel doors, which are also framed by stone keystone lintels. A stone deck is located in front of the doors.

An open field extends from the guardhouse northwest towards the stream, which runs southwest through the park, leading from the Third Street Dam towards an unknown termination point. The field features scattered trees throughout, and gently slopes downhill. A small historic stage is located to the north of the guardhouse, along the side of the park boundary. Called "Rose Tree Park," this small stage features a paved deck which is lined by a stone wall. Stone stairs lead up to the stage. Park benches and overhead lighting line the edges of this stage. This small stage area is surrounded on three sides by trees and bushes, sheltering it from the overall park.

Continuing north from the guardhouse and Rose Tree Park, the ground begins to slope steeply downhill. A modern picnic shelter, constructed of wood resting and resting on stone pillars, is located just south of the creek. A path leads up from the stream to the picnic shelter. The path leading up to the picnic shelter intersects with a second path which runs the length of the park from north to south. This second path also parallels the stream. A small man made lake is located across the stream from the picnic shelter. The lake was created by diverting the stream into a man made depression. Three small historic bridges are located around the lake, providing access to the areas surrounding the lake. The bridges are all constructed of wood planks with either metal or wood railings.

The stream and the path lead farther northeast through the park until they intersect with Third Street. The area surrounding the stream is heavily wooded and steeply sloped on either side. As the stream and the path approach Third Street, the path deviates to the southeast, while the stream continues on its original northeast course. The stream ends at the Third Street Dam, which controls the flow of water from Broomall Lake into the stream. A second stream historically intersected the first at this point in the park; however, the stream bed is completely dry and is now partially overgrown.

The path, which had been following the stream, turns to the southeast, leading uphill to a small parking lot on Third Street. The path is partially constructed of stone, and features shallow stone stairs leading up the side of the hill. The path splits part way up the hill, with one section continuing to the parking lot, and the other turning north towards the stream. The path leading to the stream leads to a pair of stone abutments, which once supported a bridge over the stream. The bridge is no longer extant.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the land constituting present-day Glen Providence Park was owned by John M. Broomall, a Delaware County judge, Civil War-era Congressman, and friend of Abraham Lincoln. After Broomall's death in 1894, his extensive real estate holdings were sold off (Janco 1994:MD1). A parcel of Broomall's land lying on the south side of Broomall's Lake was acquired first by John B. Townsend, and then, in 1905, by attorney George T. Butler and his wife (Wheelock 1944:n.p.). The son of William Butler who sat on the bench in both Chester and Delaware counties, George Butler, had been admitted to the Delaware County Bar in 1893, and he would practice in that capacity for more than a half-century (Wheelock 1944:n.p.).

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (CONT):

There were no public parks in Delaware County in 1933, when a Delaware County Park Board was organized. A prime mover in this park-building initiative was long-time Delaware County resident and nature-lover Samuel L. Smedley, whose namesake uncle had helped lay out Philadelphia's Fairmount Park (Wheelock n.d.:n.p.). Smedley served as the Delaware County Park Board's first President. Under his leadership, the Board created its first park in 1936, on approximately 10.11 hectares (25 acres) of land donated by George Butler and his wife for the purpose of providing the community with an arboretum and bird sanctuary. Mrs. Butler named the new park "Glen Providence" (Votaw 1949:n.p.; Anonymous n.d.:n.p.). A plaque mounted at the main entrance to the park indicates that additional land for the park was acquired from James J. Skelly and the Media Swimming and Rowing Club.

According to a visiting reporter, at the time of its creation Glen Providence Park was already endowed with a variety of ferns, shrubs, flowers, berry bushes, vines, grasses, and trees. To make it even more attractive to both animals and men, laborers under the Works Progress Administration excavated a pond near the center of the park, and ringed it with a network of paths (Anonymous n.d.:n.p.). In the coming years, this pond—sometimes referred to as "Mirror Lake"—was stocked with perch, bass, and sunfish, and additional varieties of trees were introduced to the park by individual donors and organizations such as the Back to Nature Club of Philadelphia, the Girls Club of Upper Providence, and the Field and Stream Club (Votaw 1949:n.p.; Wheelock 1944:n.p.).

By mid-1944, a guard house had been erected near a stone plaza marking the main entrance to the park, which had become known as a "bird haven" (Wheelock 1944:n.p.). In a newspaper article published in October 1949 the park was described as "one of the scenic spots in Delaware County." Among its appointments at that time were a number of bridges, lighting fixtures around the lake (which facilitated night-time ice skating), and a cabin where first aid could be administered (Votaw 1949:n.p.). The addition of an amphitheater to the grounds in the early 1940s literally set the stage for outdoor concerts and community gatherings such as Easter sunrise services.

Glen Providence Park is a good example of a small, historic, county park, which was established to serve as a local arboretum and bird sanctuary. Land was donated by private citizens, and work on the park was done as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Created during the 1930s, the WPA engaged in a wide variety of projects, aimed at creating jobs for the large number of unemployed. The goal of the WPA was to provide short-term, low cost jobs which would employ a large number of people (Cutler 1985: 6-7). The WPA was responsible for the majority of the improvements at Glen Providence Park, including laying trails, building the bridges and the lake, and constructing the guardhouse (Anonymous n.d.:n.p.). The park has served as a local community recreational area since its creation in 1933. The structures constructed as part of the WPA project are still extant and are in good condition. The park is still used extensively by local residents and is maintained by the County Parks Administration.

NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION:

Glen Providence Park was evaluated according to criteria set forth in *National Register Bulletin 15: "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation"* (National Park Service 1991). Glen Providence Park is recommended eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for recreation. The park is a good example of a community park, as it retains its historic setting, layout, and structures. The general layout of the park remains consistent with the layout of the park since its inception in 1933. The structures created by the WPA (including the trails, guardhouse, man made lake, and bridges) remain extant and in good condition. The park is a good example of a community park, created from donated land, and then improved upon by the WPA. Glen Providence Park is recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION (CONT):

Glen Providence Park is not associated with any significant individual or events, and is not recommended eligible under Criterion B. Glen Providence Park was also evaluated for its eligibility under Criterion C. Glen Providence Park embodies the characteristics of an early twentieth-century community park. Composed of land which was donated by local residents, the park remains unaltered since the 1930s. The physical elements of the park (the guardhouse, amphitheater, bridges, etc.) have not been significantly altered since the early twentieth century, when they were constructed by the WPA. All of these structures are good examples of the work that was done by the WPA during this time period. In addition to the cohesiveness of these structures, the man made lake and trails are also still extant and in good condition. The park has retained its integrity of design, and is recommended eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C. Eligibility under Criterion D cannot be fully addressed at this time since no archaeological testing has been performed to date.

NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

The National Register boundary for Glen Providence Park consists of an area defined by its existing tax parcel boundary. This is both the historic boundary of the park as well as the current boundary. The total area enclosed by the proposed National Register Boundary is 14.72 hectares (36.37 acres). The park is bounded on the north by the edge of pavement of West Third Street, on the northwest by the edge of pavement of Kirk Lane, and on the south by privately-owned properties fronting on North Ridley Creek Road, West Baltimore Avenue, and State Street. A finger of the park extends southeast, past privately-owned land to allow for access via State Street.

The period of significance for the property is 1933 until 1951. This time period includes the original inception date of the property and extends to include the WPA work that was undertaken in the late 1930s. The date extends past the period of the WPA work to reflect the parks continued use as a recreational facility. This amount of land is sufficient to retain the feeling, association, and setting to convey the property's significance under both Criteria A and C. The proposed boundary includes those features historically associated with the property, including the guardhouse, amphitheater, trails, man made lake, and the geographical features of the terrain. This boundary was prepared in accordance with guidelines set forth in the *National Register Bulletin*: "Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties" (Seifert et al. 1997).

REFERENCES CITED:

Anonymous

- n.d. "New Park Rich in Trees, Birds." Undated newspaper clipping in the "General 1931-1950" vertical file of the Media Borough Historic Archives, Media and Upper Providence Free Library, Media, PA.

Cutler, Phoebe

- 1985 *The Public Landscape of the New Deal*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Janco, Mary Ann

- 1994 "A Quiet Setting Belies an Eventful Past." Article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, edition of January 16, 1994. Clipping is archived in the "Broomall's Lake" box at the Media Borough Historic Archives, Media and Upper Providence Free Library, Media, PA.

REFERENCES CITED (CONT):

National Park Service

- 1991 *National Register Bulletin Number 15*. "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation." Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Government Printing Office.

Seifert, Donna, Barbara J. Little, Beth L. Savage, and John H. Sprinkle, Jr.

- 1997 *National Register Bulletin*, "Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties." U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1995, Revised 1997.

United States Geological Survey

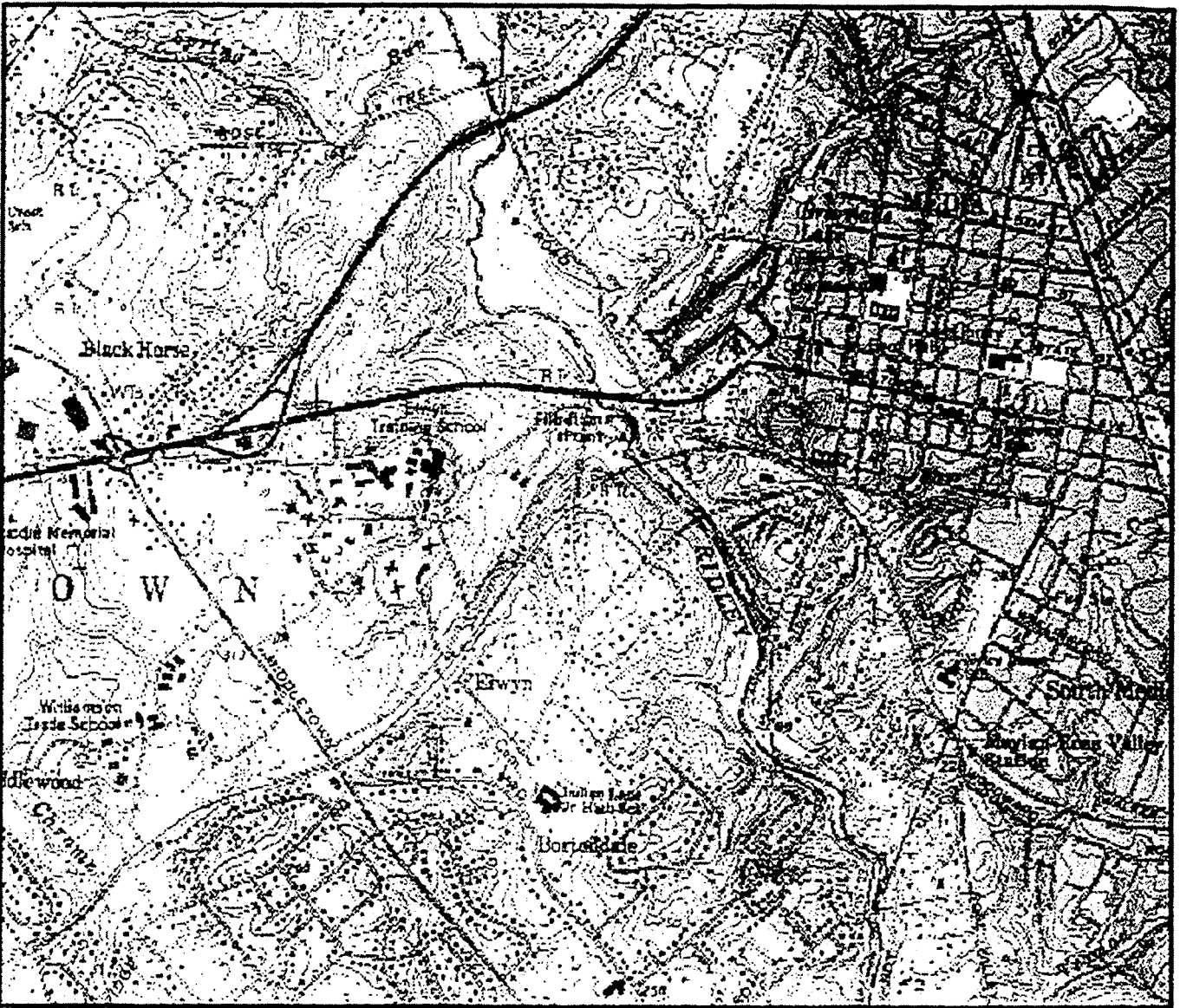
- 1994 *Media, PA, Quadrangle*, 7.5 minute series. Aerial photographs taken 1943. Photorevised 1965. Field checked 1966. Revised 1994. Reston, Virginia.

Votaw, Galja Barish

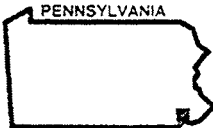


- 1949 "Glen Providence Park One of Scenic Spots in County." In the *Chester Times*, edition of October 21, 1949. Newspaper clipping in the "General 1931-1950" vertical file of the Media Borough Historic Archives, Media and Upper Providence Free Library, Media, PA.

Wheelock, Billie

- n.d. "Smedley Park has largest Hemlock Grove in County." Undated newspaper clipping in the "General 1931-1950" vertical file of the Media Borough Historic Archives, Media and Upper Providence Free Library, Media, PA.
- 1944 "Glen Providence, on Edge of Media is bird haven." Undated newspaper clipping in the "General 1931-1950" vertical file of the Media Borough Historic Archives, Media and Upper Providence Free Library, Media, PA.



PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY - GLEN PROVIDENCE PARK

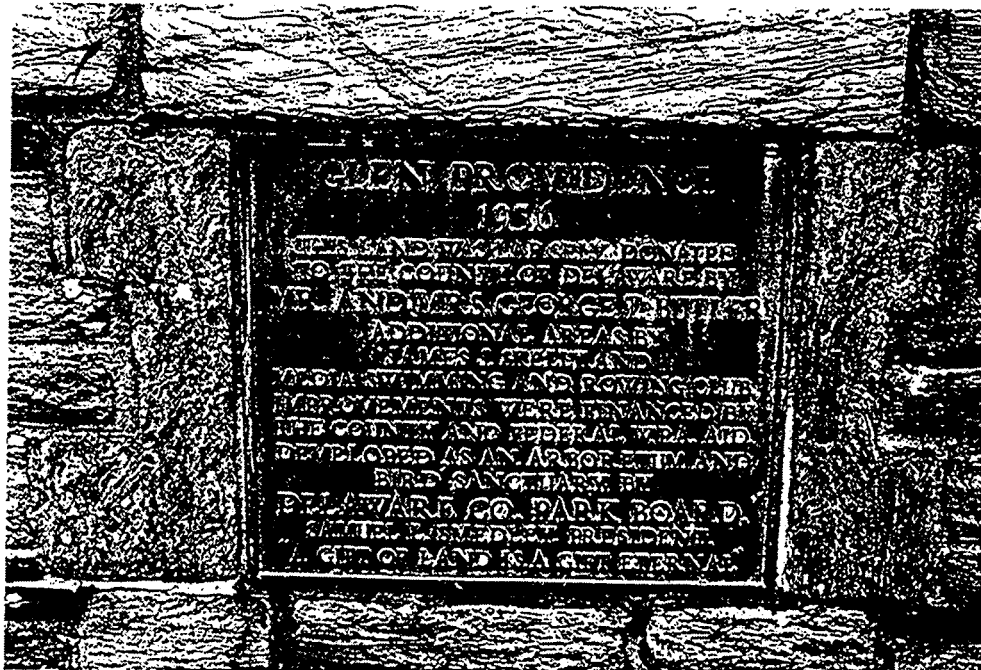
QUADRANGLE LOCATION	SCALE	SOURCE
 	 <p>Prepared by CHRS, Inc.</p>	<p>USGS, 1994 MEDIA, PA</p>

RESOURCE LOCATION MAP - GLEN PROVIDENCE PARK

THIRD STREET DAM PROJECT



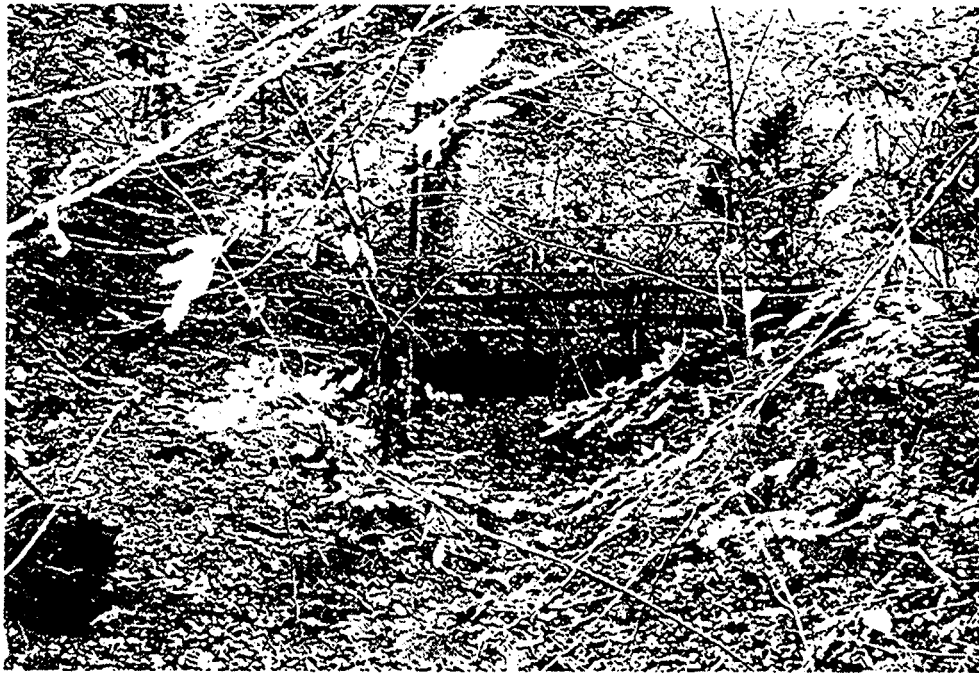
Glen Providence Park: Photograph 2 – View facing south of the historic stone guardhouse. Note the historic construction materials and the historic twenty-five pane fixed windows.



Glen Providence Park: Photograph 3 – View facing northwest of the historic plaque commemorating the park.



Glen Providence Park: Photograph 4 – View facing west overlooking the man made lake. Note the historic bridge at the far end of the lake.



Glen Providence Park: Photograph 5 – View facing southeast of a historic bridge located at the Third Street end of the park. Note the wood railings and the general setting of the bridge.